Bhaja Govindam
Padmavasan

Popular Scripture Series-1

भज गोविन्दम्

BHAJA GOVINDAM

OF SRI SANKARACARYA

Translated by

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PREFACE

Of all the religious lyrics in Sanskrit, Bhaja Govindam of Sri Sankaracharya is probably the most popular. The highest truths of Vedanta, so essential for man's mental and spiritual health, have been set into mnemonic verses in very simple language. No wonder, in all parts of India—and even in some places outside India—this little and lovely lyric is chanted and sung whole-heartedly by innumerable people for their hearts' solace.

We have therefore great pleasure in presenting to the public this edition of Bhaja Govindam which contains the text in Devanagari script along with

transliteration in Roman script and a lucid translation in English verse by Swami Nikhilananda. We are sure that the book will be a boon, especially to those who are not very familiar with Sanskrit.

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भज गोविन्दम्

Bhaja Govindam

द्वादशमञ्जरिका

1. Dvādaśamañjarika

भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं
भज गोविन्दं मूढमते ।
संप्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले
नहि नहि रक्षति 'डुकृञ् करणे' ॥

Bhaja govindam bhaja govindam
Bhaja govindam mūdhamate
Samprāpte sannihite kāle
Nahi nahi rakṣati ḍukṛñ karaṇe.

Worship Govinda, worship Govinda,
Worship Govinda, foolish one!
Rules of grammar profit nothing
Once the hour of death draws nigh.

मूढ जहीहि धनागम तृष्णां
कुरु सद्बुद्धिं मनसि वितृष्णाम् ।
यल्लभसे निजकर्मोपात्तं
वित्तं तेन विनोदय चित्तम् ॥ १ ॥

1. *Mūḍha jahihi dhanāgama-tṛṣṇām*
Kuru sadbuddhim manasi vitṛṣṇām
Yad-labhase nijakarmopāttam
Vittam tena vinodaya cittam.

Renounce, O fool, your ceaseless thirst
For hoarding gold and precious gems;
Content yourself with what may come
Through deeds performed in earlier lives;
Devote your mind to righteousness
And let dispassion be your law. (1)

नारी-स्तनभर-नाभीदेशं
दृष्ट्वा मा गा मोहावेशम् ।
एतन्मांस-वसादि-विकारं
मनसि विचिन्तय वारं वारम् ॥ २ ॥

2. *Nārī-stanabhara-nābhideśam*
Dṛṣṭvā mā gā mohāveśam
Etanmāmsa-vasādi-vikāram
Manasi vicintaya vāram vāram.

Lust at the sight of a woman's body
Springs from ignorance, springs from error;
Inwardly reason, over and over,
Bodies are flesh and blood and fat. (2)

नलिनी-दल-गत-जल-मतितरलं
तद्वज्जीवित-मतिशयचपलम् ।
विद्धि व्याध्यभिमानग्रस्तं
लोकं शोकहतं च समस्तम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. *Nalini-dala-gata-jala-matitaralam*
Tadvat-jivitamatiśaya-capalam
Viddhi vyāddhy-abhimāna-grastam
Lokam śokahatam ca samastam.

Uncertain is the life of man
As rain-drops on a lotus leaf;
The whole of humankind is prey
To grief and ego and disease. (3)

यावद्वित्तोपार्जनसक्त-
स्तावन्निज-परिवारो रक्तः
पश्चाज्जीवति जर्जरदेहे
वार्तां कोऽपि न पृच्छति गेहे ॥ ४ ॥

4. *Yāvad vittopārjana-sakta-*
Stāvad nija-parivāro raktaḥ
Paścāt jivati jarjaradehe
Vārtām ko'pi na pṛcchati gehe.

While a man supports his family,
See what loving care they show!
But when his aging body falters,
Nearing the time of dissolution,
None, not even his nearest kin,
Will think to ask him how he fares. (4)

यावत्पवनो निवसति देहे
तावत् पृच्छति कुशलं गेहे ।
गतवति वायौ देहापाये
भार्या बिभ्यति तस्मिन् काये ॥ ५ ॥

5. *Yāvad pavano nivasati dehe*
Tāvad pṛcchati kuśalam gehe
Gatavati vāyau dehāpāye
Bhāryā bibhyati tasmin kāye.

While man's soul remains in his body,
Fondly his family wish him well;
But when the life-breath leaves its dwelling,
Even his wife will flee in fear. (5)

अर्थ-मनर्थं भावय नित्यं
नास्ति ततः सुखलेशः सत्यम् ।
पुत्रादपि धनभाजां भीतिः
सर्वत्रैषा विहिता रीतिः ॥ ६ ॥

6. *Arthamanartham bhāvaya nityam*
Nāsti tataḥ sukhaleśaḥ satyam
Putrādapi dhanabhājām bhitiḥ
Sarvatraiṣā vihitā ritiḥ.

Remember, riches bring in grief:
Truly, no joy abides in them.
A rich man even fears his son:
This is the position everywhere. (6)

बालस्तावत् क्रीडासक्त-
स्तरुणस्तावत् तरुणीसक्तः ।
वृद्धस्ताव-च्चिन्ता-सक्तः
परे ब्रह्मणि कोऽपि न सक्तः ॥ ७ ॥

7. *Balastāvad kriḍāsakta—*
Staruṇastāvad taruṇisaktaḥ
Vṛddhastavad cintasaktaḥ
Pare brahmaṇi ko'pi na saktaḥ.

Lost in play is the carefree stripling
Lost in his sweetheart's charms, the youth;
The old man broods upon his sorrows;
None there is, alas, whose spirit
Yearns to be lost in the Parabrahman. (7)

का ते कान्ता कस्ते पुत्रः
संसारोऽयमतीव विचित्रः ।
कस्य त्वं वा कुत आयात-
स्तत्त्वं चिन्तय तदिह भ्रातः ॥ ८ ॥

8. *Kā te kāntā kaste putraḥ*
Samsaro'yamativa vicitraḥ
Kasya tvam vā kuta āyāta-
Stattvam cintaya tadiha bhrataḥ.

Who is your wife? And who your child?
Strange indeed is this mortal world!
Who are you? And who is your own?
Where is the region whence you come?
Brother, ponder on these things. (8)

सत्संगत्वे निस्संगत्वं
निस्संगत्वे निर्मोहत्वम् ।
निर्मोहत्वे निश्चलतत्त्वं
निश्चलतत्त्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥ ९ ॥

9. *Satsangatve nissangatvam*
Nissangatve nirmohatvam
Nirmohatve niścalatattvam
Niścalatattve jivanmuktiḥ.

Good association breeds detachment;
Detachment leads to freedom from delusion;
Undeluded, one contacts changeless Reality;
Contact with Reality bestows Liberation-while-alive. (9)

वयसि गते कः कामविकारः
शुष्के नीरे कः कासारः ।
क्षीणे वित्ते कः परिवारो
ज्ञाते तत्त्वे कः संसारः ॥ १० ॥

10. *Vayasi gate kaḥ kāmavikāraḥ*
śuṣke nire kaḥ kāsāraḥ
Kṣiṇe vitte kaḥ parivāro
Jñāte tattve kaḥ samsāraḥ.

Youth being fled, what good is passion?
Water gone, what use a lake?
Where to be found our friends and kinsmen
Once the money's all exhausted?
Where is the world, when Truth is known? (10)

मा कुरु धन-जन-यौवन-गर्वं
हरति निमेषात् कालः सर्वम् ।
मायामयमिद-मखिलं हित्वा
ब्रह्मपदं त्वं प्रविश विदित्वा ॥ ११॥

11. *Mā kuru dhana-jana-yauvana garvam*
Harati nimeṣāt kālaḥ sarvam
Māyāmayamida—makhilam hitvā
Brahmapadam tvam pravisa viditvā.

Boast not of youth or friends or wealth;
Swifter than eyes can wink, by Time
Each one of these is stolen away.
Abjure the illusion of the world
And join yourself to timeless Truth. (11)

दिनयामिन्यौ सायं प्रातः
शिशिरवसन्तौ पुनरायातः ।
कालः क्रीडति गच्छत्यायु-
स्तदपि न मुंचत्याशावायुः ॥ १२॥

12. *Dinayāminyau sāyam prātaḥ*
Siśiravasantau punarāyātaḥ
Kalaḥ kriḍati gacchatyāyu-
Stadapi na muñcatyāśāvāyuḥ.

Sunrise and sunset, daylight and darkness,
Winter and springtime, come and go;
Even the course of time is playful;
Life itself soon ebbs away;
But man's vain hope, alas! goes onward,
Tirelessly onward evermore. (12)

द्वादशमंजरिकाभिरशेषः
कथितो वैयाकरणस्यैषः ।
उपदेशोऽभूद्विद्यानिपुणैः
श्रीमच्छंकरभगवच्चरणैः ॥ १३ ॥

13. *Dvādaśamañjarikābhiraśeṣaḥ*
Kathito vaiyākaraṇasyaiṣaḥ
Upadeśo bhū-dvidyānipuṇaiḥ
Srimacchankara-bhagavaccaraṇaiḥ.

Through this bouquet of a dozen verses
Was imparted succinctly to a grammarian
Instruction supreme by the all-knowing
Sankara, adored as the Bhagavadpada.(13)

इति श्रीशंकराचार्योपदिष्ट-
द्वादशमंजरिकास्तोत्रं समाप्तम् ॥

Iti Sriśaṇkarācāryopadiṣṭa—
dvādaśamañjarikāstotram
samāptam.

(२) चर्पटपञ्जरिका
2. Carpatapañjarikā

पद्मपाद् उवाच—

का ते कान्ता-धनगतचिन्ता
वातुल किं तव नास्ति नियन्ता ।
त्रिजगति सज्जन-संगतिरेका
भवति भवार्णवतरणे नौका ॥ १ ॥

1. *Padmapāda uvāca—*
kā te kāntā-dhana-gata-cinta
Vatula kim tava nāsti niyantā
Trijagati sajjana samgatirekā
Bhavati bhavārṇava-taraṇe nauka.

Dreaming of wife, dreaming of wealth,
Why do you roam restless as the wind?
Is there none to take you in charge?
Know then, my friend, in all the three worlds
The company of the good is the only boat
That can take you across the samsara sea. (1)

तोटकाचार्य उवाच--

जटिलो मुण्डी लुंचितकेशः
काषायाम्बर-बहुकृत-वेषः ।
पश्यन्नपि न पश्यति मूढो
ह्युदरनिमित्तं बहुकृत-वेषः ॥ २ ॥

2. *Toṭakācārya uvāca:—*
Jatilo muṇḍi lumcitakeśaḥ
Kāṣāyāmbara-bahukṛta veṣaḥ
Paśyannapi na paśyati mūḍho
Hyudara-nimittam bahukṛta-veṣaḥ

Many are those whose locks are matted,
Many whose heads are closely shaved,
Many who pluck out all their hair;
Some of them wearing robes of ochre,
Some of them clad in other colours—
All these things for their stomach's sake.
Seeing Truth revealed before them,
Still the deluded see It not. (2)

हस्तामलक उवाच—
अंगं गलितं पलितं मुण्डं
दशनविहीनं जातं तुण्डम् ।
वृद्धो याति गृहीत्वा दण्डं
तदपि न मुंचत्याशा–पिण्डम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. *Hastāmalaka uvāca:—*
Angam galitam palitam muṇḍam
Daśana vihinam jātam tuṇḍam
Vṛddho yāti gṛhitva daṇḍam
Tadapi na muñcatyāśā-pinḍam.

Feeble has grown the old man's body,
Toothless his gums and bald his head;
But there he goes, upon his crutches,
Clinging firmly to fruitless hope! (3)

सुबोध उवाच--

अग्रे वह्निः पृष्ठे भानुः
रात्रौ चुबुकसमर्पित-जानुः ।
करतल-भिक्ष-स्तरुतलवास-
स्तदपि न मुंचत्याशा-पाशः ॥ ४ ॥

4. *Subodha uvāca:—*
Agre vahniḥ pṛṣṭhe bhānūḥ
Rātrau cubukasamarpita-jānuḥ
Karatala-bhikṣa-starutalavāsa-
Stadapi na muñcatyāśāpāśaḥ.

Seeking for warmth, the penniless beggar
Closely crouches before his fire,
Or sits with only the sun to warm him;
Nightly he lays him down to slumber,
Curling up to keep out the cold;
Hungrily eats his beggar's portion
Out of the bowl his hands provide him;
Takes up his dwelling under a tree:
Still is his heart a helpless prisoner
Bound with the chains of empty hope. (4)

वार्तिककार उवाच—

कुरुते गंगासागर-गमनं
व्रतपरिपालन-मथवा दानम् ।
ज्ञानविहीनः सर्वमतेन
मुक्तिं भजति न जन्मशतेन ॥ ५ ॥

5. *Vārtikakāra uvāca:—*
Kurute gaṅgā sāgara-gamanam
Vrata paripālana-mathavā dānam
Jñāna vihinaḥ sarvamatena
Muktim bhajati na janmaśatena.

Though, for the sake of his salvation,
Man may go a-pilgrimage to Ganga-sagara
Keep his vows, and give to the poor,
Failing the Knowledge of the Highest,
Nothing of this assures him freedom
Even in the span of a hundred lives. (5)

नित्यानन्द उवाच--

सुरमन्दिर-तरुमूल-निवासः
शय्या–भूतल–मजिनं वासः ।
सर्व–परिग्रह–भोगत्यागः
कस्य सुखं न करोति विरागः ॥६॥

6. *Nityānanda uvāca:—*
Suramandira tarumūla nivāsaḥ
Sayyā-bhūtala-majinam vāsaḥ
Sarva parigraha-bhogatyāgaḥ
Kasya sukham na karoti virāgaḥ.

Make of a temple or tree your home,
Clothe yourself in the skin of a deer,
And use the bare earth for your bed,
Avoiding gifts and sense delights:
Could any fail to be content,
Blest with dispassion such as this? (6)

आनन्दगिरिः उवाच—
योगरतो वा भोगरतो वा
संगरतो वा संगविहीनः ।
यस्य ब्रह्मणि रमते चित्तं
नन्दति नन्दति नन्दत्येव ॥ ७ ॥

7. *Anandagiriḥ uvāca:—*
Yogarato vā bhogarato vā
Samgarato vā samgavihinah
Yasya brahmaṇi ramate cittam
Nandati nandati nandatyeva.

Plunge in yoga or in enjoyment,
Mix with all or stand severely apart;
For the heart that delights ever in Brahman
It is bliss, bliss, bliss—bliss without end. (7)

दृढभक्त उवाच—

भगवद्गीता किंचिदधीता
गंगाजल-लव-कणिका पीता ।
सकृदपि येन मुरारि-समर्चा
क्रियते तेन यमेन न चर्चा ॥ ८ ॥

8. *Dṛḍhabhakta uvāca:—*
Bhagavad gitā kimcidadhitā
Gangā-jala-lava-kanikā pitā
Sakṛdapi yena murāri-samarcā
Kriyate tena yamena na carcā.

Let a man but read from the Gita,
Drink of the Ganges but a drop,
Worship but once the Lord Almighty,
And he will set at rest for ever
All his fear of the King of Death. (8)

नित्यनाथ उवाच—

पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं
पुनरपि जननी-जठरे शयनम् ।
इह संसारे बहुदुस्तारे
कृपयाऽपारे पाहि मुरारे ॥ ९ ॥

9. *Nityanātha uvacā:—*
Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam
Punarapi janani-jathare śayanam
Iha samsāre bahu dustare
Kṛpayā'pare pāhi murāre.

Birth unceasing! Death unceasing!
Ever to pass through a mother's womb!
Hard to cross is the world's wide ocean:
Lord, redeem me through Thy mercy. (9)

रथ्या-कर्पट-विरचित-कन्थः
पुण्यापुण्य-विवर्जित-पन्थः ।
नाहं न त्वं नायं लोक-
स्तदपि किमर्थं क्रियते शोकः ॥ १० ॥

10. *Rathyā-karpaṭa-viracita-kanthaḥ*
Punyāpunya-vivarjita-panthaḥ
Nāham na tvam nāyam loka-
Stadapi kimartham kriyate śokaḥ.

Rags cast off along the highway
Serve as a garment for the monk;
Freed from vice and freed from virtue,
Onward he wanders; in his sight
Nor I nor you nor the world exists.
Why, then, so give way to sorrow? (10)

सुरेन्द्र उवाच—
कस्त्वं कोऽहं कुत आयातः
का मे जननी को मे तातः ।
इति परिभावय सर्वमसारं
विश्वं त्यक्त्वा स्वप्न-विचारम् ॥ ११ ॥

11. *Surendra uvāca:—*
Kastvam koham kuta āyātaḥ
kā me janani ko me tātaḥ
Iti paribhāvaya sarvamasāram
Viṣvam tyaktvā svapna-vicāram.

Who am I? And who are you?
What is the place from which I come?
Who is my mother? Who my sire?
Pondering thus, perceive them all
As fancies only, without substance;
Give up the world as an idle dream. (11)

मेधातिथिरुवाच—
त्वयि मयि सर्वत्रैको विष्णु-
र्व्यर्थं कुप्यसि मय्यसहिष्णुः ।
सर्वस्मिन्नपि पश्यात्मानं
सर्वत्रोत्सृज भेदज्ञानम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. *Medhātithir-uvāca:—*
Tvayi mayi sarva-traiko viṣṇur-
Vyartham kupyasi mayyasahiṣṇuḥ
Sarvasminnapi pasyātmānam
Sarvatrotsṛja bhedajñānam.

Vishnu alone it is who dwells
In you, in me, in everything;
Empty of meaning is your wrath,
And the impatience you reveal.
Seeing yourself in everyone,
Have done with all diversity. (12)

शत्रौ मित्रे पुत्रे बन्धौ
मा कुरु यत्नं विग्रहसन्धौ ।
भव समचित्तः सर्वत्र त्वं
वाञ्छस्यचिरा-द्यदि विष्णुत्वम् ॥ १३ ॥

13. *Satrau mitre putre bandhau*
Mā kuru yatnam vigrahasandhau.
Bhava samacittaḥ sarvatra tvam
Vāñcasyacirāt yadi viṣṇutvam.

Be not attached to friend or foe,
To son or kinsman, peace or war;
If you aspire to Vishnu's realm,
Look upon all things equally. (13)

भारतीवंश उवाच—
कामं क्रोधं लोभं मोहं
त्यक्त्वात्मानं भावय कोऽहम् ।
आत्मज्ञान-विहीना मूढा-
स्ते पच्यन्ते नरकनिगूढाः ॥ १४ ॥

14. *Bhārativamśa uvāca:—*
Kāmam krodham lobham moham
Tyaktvātmānam bhāvaya koham.
Atmajñāna-vihinā mūḍhā-
Ste pacyante narakanigūḍhāḥ.

Give up the curse of lust and wrath;
Give up delusion, give up greed;
Remember who you really are.
Fools are they that are blind to Self:
Cast into hell, they suffer there.

सुमतिरुवाच—

गेयं गीता-नामसहस्रं
ध्येयं श्रीपतिरूप-मजस्रम् ।
नेयं सज्जनसंगे चित्तं
देयं दीनजनाय च वित्तम् ॥ १५ ॥

15. *Sumatir uvāca:—*
Geyam gitānāma-sahasram
Dhyeyam sripatirūpa-majasram
Neyam sajjana sange cittam
Deyam dina janāya ca vittam.

Every day recite from the Gita;
Chant the thousand names of Vishnu,
Cherishing Him within your heart,
Take delight to be with the holy;
Give your riches away to the poor. (15)

सुखतः क्रियते रामाभोगः
पश्चाद्धन्त शरीरे रोगः ।
यद्यपि लोके मरणं शरणं
तदपि न मुंचति पापाचरणम् ॥ १६ ॥

16. *Sukhataḥ kriyate rāmābhogaḥ*
Pascāddhanta sarire rogaḥ
Yadyapi loke maraṇam saraṇam
Tadapi na muñcati pāpācaraṇam.

He who yields to lust for pleasure
Leaves his frame a prey to disease;
Yet, though death is the final ending,
None forswears his sinfulness. (16)

प्राणायामं प्रत्याहारं
नित्यानित्य-विवेक-विचारम् ।
जाप्य-समेत-समाधि-विधानं
कुर्ववधानं महदवधानम् ॥ १७ ॥

17. *Prāṇāyamam pratyāhāram*
Nityānitya-vivekā-vicāram
Jāpya-sameta-samādhi-vidhānam
Kurvavadhānam mahadavadhānam.

Control the self, restrain the breath,
Sift out the transient from the True,
Repeat the holy name of God,
And still the restless mind within.
To this, the universal rule,
Apply yourself with heart and soul. (17)

गुरुचरणाम्बुज-निर्भरभक्तः
संसारा-दचिराद्भव मुक्तः ।
सेन्द्रिय-मानस-नियमादेवं
द्रक्ष्यसि निज-हृदयस्थं देवम् ॥ १८ ॥

18. *Guru-caraṇāmbuja-nirbhara bhaktaḥ*
Samsārā dacirādbhava muktaḥ
Sendriya-mānasa-niyamādevam
Drakṣyasi nija-hṛdayastham devam.

Cherish your guru's lotus feet
And free yourself without delay
From the enslavement of this world;
Curb your senses and your mind
And see the Lord within your heart. (18)

मूढः कश्चन वैयाकरणो
डुकृञ्करणाध्ययन-धुरीणः ।
श्रीमच्छंकर-भगवच्छिष्यै-
र्बोधित आसीच्छोधित-करणः ॥ १९ ॥

19. *Mūḍhaḥ kaścana vaiyākaraṇo*
ḍukṛñkaraṇādhyayana-dhuriṇaḥ
Srimacchamkara-bhagava-cchiṣyair-
Bodhita āsicchodhita-karaṇaḥ.

Thus was a silly grammarian
Lost in conning rules
Cleansed of his narrow vision
And shown the Light by Sankara's
apostles. (19)

भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं
भज गोविन्दं मूढमते ।
नामस्मरणादन्यमुपायं
न हि पश्यामो भवतरणे ॥ २० ॥

20. *Bhaja govindaṁ bhaja govindaṁ*
Bhaja govindam mūḍhamate
Nāma-smaraṇā-danya-mupāyam
Nahi paśyāmo bhavataraṇe

Worship Govinda, worship Govinda,
Worship Govinda, foolish one!
Other than chanting the Lord's sweet names,
Means there is none to cross life's ocean. (20)

इति चर्पट-पंजरिका स्तोत्रं समाप्तम् ॥

Iti carpata-panjarika stotram samaptam.

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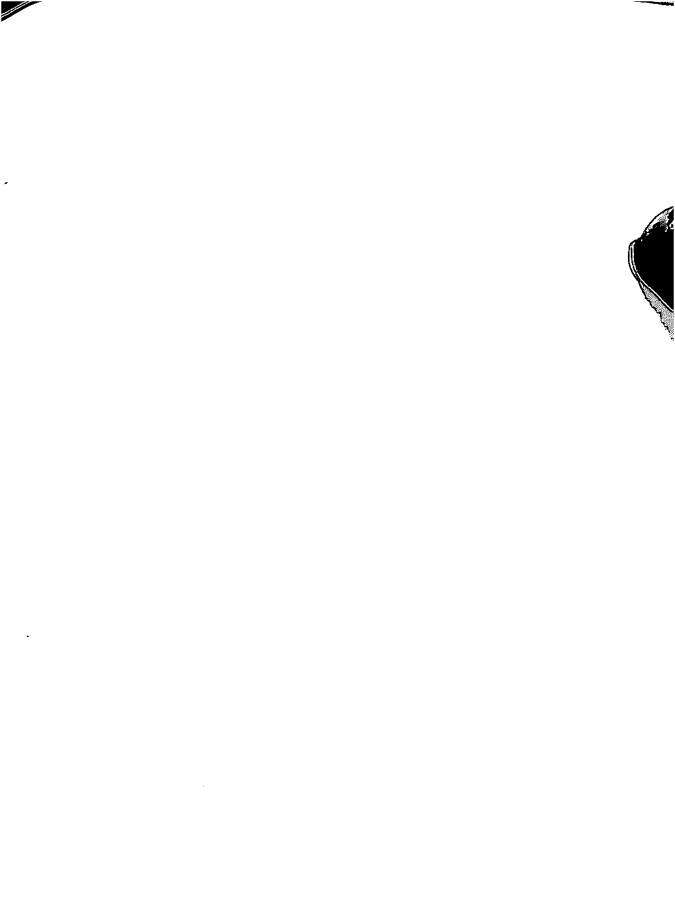
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